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ABSTRACT

The term "direct instruction" is often used by researchers and educators as if there were consensus regarding its meaning, when in fact, it covers a variety of qualitative differences. To test this hypothesis, two second grade teachers, each categorized as a proponent of direct instruction, were studied using descriptive techniques. The first teacher, a regular classroom teacher, had taught for 7 years, was a leader of a second-grade teaching team, was completing a masters degree, welcomed professional growth opportunities, and aspired to be a leader in staff development. The second teacher was a professor and researcher of reading instruction who had previously taught in elementary schools. Each teacher was observed daily for 7 days, interviewed twice, and maintained a daily journal about his or her teaching. These data were used to compile case studies of the two teachers. Analysis of the data revealed that, while both teachers were superficially similar in terms of professional concern, management, grouping, and treatment of high and low reading groups, they were quite different in their conception of instructional role, response to mandates, and use of commercial materials. The findings support the hypothesis that the term direct instruction can mean many things. (Appendixes contain the case studies of the two teachers.) (FL)

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TWO STYLES OF DIRECT INSTRUCTION IN TEACHING SECOND-GRADE READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

Gerald G. Duffy, Laura R. Roehler,
and Diana Reinsmoen

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ABSTRACT

This study was based on the hypothesis that the term "direct instruction" is used by researchers as if there is consensus regarding its meaning when, in fact, it masks a variety of qualitative differences. Two second-grade teachers, both categorized as proponents of "direct instruction", were studied using descriptive techniques (including case studies which appear in the appendix). The results indicate that, while both teachers were superficially similar in terms of instructional variables such as classroom atmosphere, management, and grouping, they were startingly different in the way they presented language learnings to children, their response to mandates and their use of the required commercial textbooks. These differences are detailed and discussed as they relate to the concept of direct instruction, to the methodology used when conducting reading instructional research, to the nature of instruction itself, and to the relative instructional roles to be played by materials and teachers. It is hoped that the study will stimulate discussion among reading researchers regarding the need for rigorous examination of the direct instruction concept.

TWO STYLES OF DIRECT INSTRUCTION IN TEACHING SECOND-GRADE READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY[1]

Gerald G. Duffy, Laura R. Roehler, and Diana Reinsmoen[2]

This study, like most descriptive research, generates questions rather than answers. Specifically, it raises questions about the nature of instruction, particularly the direct instruction of reading. These questions are timely since researchers of reading, who have traditionally demonstrated little interest in instruction and more in the nature of reading itself, have begun investigating how to translate new knowledge about reading comprehension into classroom practice. The most notable example of translating new knowledge into practice is at the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois, which has recently committed itself to emphasizing direct instruction of reading comprehension (Anderson, Note 1).

Such commitments assume a shared understanding about the nature of direct instruction. However, this study of two second-grade teachers suggests that "direct instruction" is an imprecise term that masks qualitatively divergent styles of classroom teaching of reading. The study is

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[1]This study was conducted at the Taipei (Taiwan) American School when the first two authors were teaching there for Michigan State University. The data were analyzed and the report was written while the first two authors were on leave at the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois.

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reported in the hope that it will stimulate communication among reading researchers regarding the need for rigorous conceptual and empirical examination of instruction, particularly as it relates to direct instruction of comprehension.

Background

Interest in direct instruction began with the process-product studies reported during the 1970's. This line of research, which consisted of trained observers visiting classrooms to record how often a particular phenomenon occurred in actual practice, resulted in correlations between the overt acts of teachers and various measurable achievement outcomes. The findings from classrooms where learning gains were great suggested that a variety of teacher behaviors, such as academic focus, precise sequencing of content, high pupil engagement, careful teacher monitoring, and specific corrective feedback, were important in producing greater achievement gains, particularly in the basic skills areas. These behaviors were characterized as "direct instruction" in reviews by Rosenshine (1976; 1979; 1980). Subsequent experimental studies (Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979; Good & Grouws, 1979) served to validate such process-product findings.

At virtually the same time in Follow-Through studies, researchers were examining the effectiveness of particular beginning reading programs, one of which was a direct instruction model (Becher, Engleman, & Carnine, 1979). This model uses carefully prepared scripts to ensure that teachers follow the prescribed steps of instruction and emphasizes many of the teacher behaviors suggested by process-product findings.

The process-product and Follow-Through studies have stimulated considerable controversy. Nevertheless, there has been a steady growth of

interest in direct teaching of reading. Three recent examples serve to illustrate this interest. The first is Cohen and Stover's (1981) recent study of comprehension of story problems in mathematics, in which they conclude that

> the solution to most learning problems continues to indicate that when behaviors sought are clearly specified and the instructional materials, strategies, and measures of mastery stringently conform to those specified behaviors, we can expect educationally significant effects. (p. 197)

The second is a statement by Pearson and Camparell (in press):

> We finally seem to be getting the message that kids learn what they are taught and get to practice. . . . The point is simple. When we identify a variable, including a text structure variable, that looks like it might make a difference in comprehension, we ought to adapt a frontal assault strategy when considering its instructional power--teach about it systematically and make certain students have a chance to practice it. (p. 7)

Finally, of course, is the commitment by the Center for the Study of Reading (Note 1):

> During the next five years, a major task of the Center for the Study of Reading ought to be to devise improved means of instruction based on insights that are emerging from basic research into the nature of reading. The challenge is to develop direct methods for teaching basic reading comprehension skills, basic study skills and basic thinking skills to tens of thousands of children who, in the absence of explicit instruction, are not acquiring these skills today. This is a challenge we accept with enthusiasm. (p. 6)

Hence, we find ourselves at a pivotal point in the history of reading education. Reading researchers possess rich and potentially revolutionary findings about the nature of reading and reading comprehension and are poised to translate these findings into direct instruction, a widely-used term which, superficially at least, encompasses a shared conceptual understanding.

Research Questions

The central premise of this paper is that instruction in general and direct instruction in particular are terms that give the illusion of consensus while masking a wide variety of crucial qualitative differences. This study was designed to surface these differences and to pose questions about instruction that ought to be studied if we are to conduct effective research on how to teach comprehension.

The vehicle for accomplishing this goal was a descriptive study of two second-grade teachers. Two research questions were posed:

1. What characterizes the classroom reading and language arts instruction of two teachers who see themselves as direct-instruction teachers?

2. What characterizes the instructional conceptions of the two teachers?

The researchers chose to describe the two teachers in terms of low and high contrasts that would not only characterize the similarities and differences in their instruction but would also raise questions and generate hypotheses regarding their conceptual understanding of the terms instruction and direct instruction. Specifically, it was anticipated that the two teachers would be quite similar in professional diligence and ability to organize the classroom but would differ in terms of "proactiveness," a concept used by the authors to describe the teacher's curricular and instructional decisions that are triggered by a conception or belief system or knowledge base that guides judgment.

It must be emphasized that this study has nothing to say about which of the two teachers was most effective. The purpose was to enrich understanding of direct instruction as a foundation for later experimental studies designed to establish whether one concept of direct instruction is better than another.

Design of the Study

Overview

The study produced two sets of observational, interview, and self-study data. The first set focused on the language arts and reading instruction of an established second-grade teacher who described herself in interviews as a "direct instruction" teacher. A second set of similar data were then gathered on a temporary teacher who assumed the instructional responsibility for the same second-grade class and whose educational writings (Duffy & Sherman, 1977; Duffy, Sherman, & Roehler, 1977) served to categorize him as a direct instruction teacher. The instructional patterns observed and the perceptions and conceptions of the two teachers were then analyzed to determine high and low contrasts between the two teachers relative to the two research questions noted above.

The study encompassed six weeks of daily language arts and reading instruction in January and February of 1981. The school was located in an English-speaking, expatriate community overseas, serving the K-12 educational needs of children from a variety of international backgrounds. Three second-grade teachers worked as a team. Following school policy, they had organized the pupils from the three homerooms into nine ability groups for reading. After the homeroom period each morning, the ability groups were dispersed among the three classrooms where they received language, spelling, and reading instruction from 8:35 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. daily. Pupils then returned to their homerooms just prior to lunch. A similar organizational arrangement was used for mathematics each afternoon.

The school mandated, through its curriculum guide, the coverage of certain instructional objectives. Similarly, specific commercial textbooks were mandated for use in reading, language, and spelling. Both teachers

described in this study were accountable for adhering to such mandates.

The Two Teachers

The regular classroom teacher had taught seven years of elementary school, three in the second grade of the school that was studied. This teacher was the designated leader of the second-grade team, had nearly completed a Master's degree, welcomed professional growth opportunities, and aspired to become a leader in staff development.

The temporary teacher is a professor and researcher of reading instruction who taught in elementary schools for nine years in the 1950's and '60s and has 15 years of subsequent university work. He prepares classroom teachers for reading instruction and is interested in the nature of instructional practice in classroom reading.

Data Collected

The data were collected first for the regular teacher and then for the temporary teacher. To allow for triangulation,[3] three sets of data were collected for each teacher by a veteran participant observer who was never involved in the classroom instruction and could, therefore, provide a relatively neutral viewpoint.

The observational data for the regular teacher were collected during seven school days in January. Twelve observations were made, with most covering the entire morning. Two formal interviews with the regular teacher were conducted during this early period and several informal interviews were conducted in the following four-and-a-half weeks. In addition, the regular

[3]Triangulation is the verification or corroboration of observations and findings by three separate sources of data.

teacher maintained a journal about her teaching that became the basis for a self-study and the third source of data about her reading and language instruction. So the three sources of data for the regular teacher consisted of approximately 32 hours of field notes, the notes from two formal interviews and several informal interviews and the teacher's self-study of her instructional efforts.

Observational data for the temporary teacher were collected for seven days during the four-and-a-half weeks he taught. These observations typically encompassed the entire morning session. Interview data included two formal interviews and several informal interviews. Finally, the temporary teacher himself mainained a daily journal. In sum, the three sources of data for the temporary teacher consisted of approximately 20 hours of field notes for seven mornings of instruction; notes from two formal interviews and several informal interviews and 19 journal entries.

Data Analysis

The two data sets were analyzed by the participant observer and the temporary teacher. The data for the two teachers were analyzed separately. The analysis of the three types of data for each teacher (field notes, interview notes, and self-study or journal entries) followed a three-phrase procedure. In the first phase, the two researchers, working independently, analyzed the data for each teacher; in the second phase, the two researchers compared their respective analyses to determine which findings could be substantiated by triangulation; and, in the third phase, mini-case studies were collaboratively written to serve as descriptive summaries of each teacher. Both case studies were read by both teachers and certified as accurate.

In the first analysis, each researcher followed the same six-step inductive procedure when analyzing each teacher's data. The researcher read all the field notes, interview notes, and journal or self-study entries for one teacher. Then these data were re-read, and sections that seemed descriptive of that teacher's instructional behavior were bracketed and categorized in the margin. Next, these data were read again with the researcher supplementing, modifying, or eliminating the margin notes in light of his/her perceptions of the total data set. The same three steps were followed for the second teacher. The margin notes for the two teachers were listed, with all high-contrast categories (where the two teachers differed) placed together on one list and all low-contrast categories (where they appeared to be much alike) placed together on another. Then the categories within each list were examined for redundancy, with some being eliminated and others being combined to form a single category. Consequently, at the end of this first phase of analysis, each researcher had identified categories of high and low contrasts for both teachers.

In the second phase of analysis, the two researchers revealed to each other their respective high and low contrast categories for each teacher. Areas of total agreement were identified first and set aside. Areas of near agreement and areas of disagreement were discussed and negotiated by reference to the data. Categories that could not be substantiated by reference to the triangulation concept were discarded.

Finally, the two researchers wrote the mini-case studies that served as descriptive summaries of the two teachers (see appendix). Each case study describes general background, instructional goals in reading, role of materials, typical instructional activities, conception of instructional

role, patterns of assisted learning, and summary, thereby providing a broad range of description while simultaneously highlighting the contrasts between the work of the two teachers.

Results

The results are presented in four sections: (1) the areas of low contrast between the two teachers; (2) three areas of *apparent* low contrast; (3) the areas of apparent low contrast reexamined in terms of differences that, although not superficially obvious, provided high contrast between the two teachers; (4) summary of the low- and high-contrast differences with notation of the major differences that surfaced in the case studies, and our answers to the two research questions.

Low Contrast Differences

Analysis revealed that the two teachers were very similar in four ways. Both were concerned professionals, efficient in generating time on task, similar in their views on grouping, and similar in their treatment of the high- and low- reading groups.

Professional concern. Both teachers showed dedication and diligence in the performance of duties, strong academic emphasis, and humanistic understanding of the emotional needs of children. Both spent many hours in the preparation of materials, often arriving before 8:00 a.m. and working in the classroom past 5:00 p.m., and returning to school at least once every weekend. Both were gentle in their interactions with children, consciously seeking to create positive pupil self-images while avoiding situations that would erode pupil confidence.

Efficiency and time-on-task. Both teachers were cognizant of the need for a well-managed, carefully-monitored classroom environment that contributed to high pupil engagement rates. They automatized the daily, routine procedures associated with managing large groups of children to make more time available for instruction and to insure a smooth flow of activities; both maintained a brisk instructional pace to maximize content covered, both provided daily feedback to pupils about their academic work, and both carefully monitored pupil progress. The regular teacher's concern with efficiency is reflected in many of her self-study and interview comments and in her inclusion of such management issues as seatwork, the timing of groups, and the establishment of routines as crucial instructional decisions. The temporary teacher was concerned with similar issues in his journal entry of January 11 when he reported that one of his first moves was to calculate the total weekly allocated instructional time in order to make plans for efficiently using that time. Subsequent journal entries and interview comments indicate a continued interest in efficiency. The field notes substantiate that both teachers attained high levels of pupil engagement.

Grouping and related decisions. Both teachers believed in grouping pupils for instruction according to ability in reading and both devoted considerable time and effort to this, particularly the regular teacher. For instance, she reported in her self-study that as team leader she led three efforts to modify the homogeneous groupings in the second-grade team between September and February. The February effort was observed as a part of this study and revealed her effort to organize ability groups that would ensure the best instruction for the pupils and would also ease the teacher's instructional task. While the temporary teacher had less opportunity to manipulate groups, his journal entries and interviews indicate a basic

agreement with the regular teacher on the need to group, the optimum size of the groups, and the need to periodically alter group membership to accommodate individual growth. The two teachers differed only in the criterion used in decisions to change an individual's group membership, with the regular teacher relying on basal text tests and the temporary teacher relying on his judgement regarding pupil attainment of specific goals and objectives.

Differentiation in treatment of top and bottom groups. The two teachers were quite similar in how they taught the top and bottom reading groups. They employed similar patterns in deciding on the order in which groups were called each day. They emphasized similar content in each group. Regarding the former, the regular teacher noted in her self-study, "We call the groups up in varying order. He (the temporary teacher) called the top group first on February 9 but called the bottom group first on January 27. I, too, vary the order to maximize the activity flow." Regarding the content taught to the two groups, both teachers spent proportionately more instructional time in word recognition with the bottom group and more time with comprehension with the top group. As the temporary teacher explained in an interview:

> The top group received proportionately more comprehension instruction because they were already fluent word processors while the lowest group received proportionately more word recognition help because their lack of confidence in identifying words prevented them from concentrating on comprehension.

Summary

The two teachers were very similar in professional concern, management, grouping, and treatment of the top and bottom groups (see Figure 1). The similarities in professionalism and management were particularly fortuitous, since they made the mid-year transition from one teacher to another relatively easy for the pupils to handle.

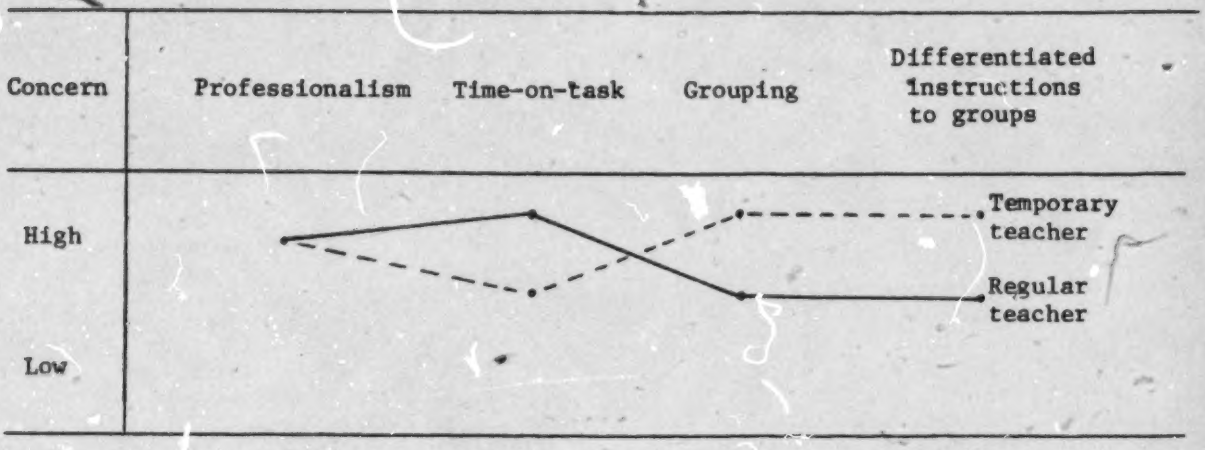

Figure 1. Areas of low teacher contrast

Apparent Areas of Low Contrast

When viewed superficially, the two teachers appeared to be similar in three other areas: conception of instructional role, response to mandates, and use of commercial materials. Regarding instructional role, for instance, both teachers were serious about their accountability for creating in children an ability to read with ever greater ease. Similarly, both teachers felt responsible for adhering to the mandates specified by the Board of Education and the school's administration. Finally, both teachers made similar use of commercial materials: both used the mandated basal reading series, language, and spelling texts; both used activities embedded in these textual materials, and both used the materials as a beginning point for planning instruction (see Figure 2).

These similarities, when combined with the four areas of low contrast discussed earlier, gave the two teachers the appearance of being virually identical in their approach to and handling of language and reading instruction. A casual visitor to the classroom would note that both worked hard,

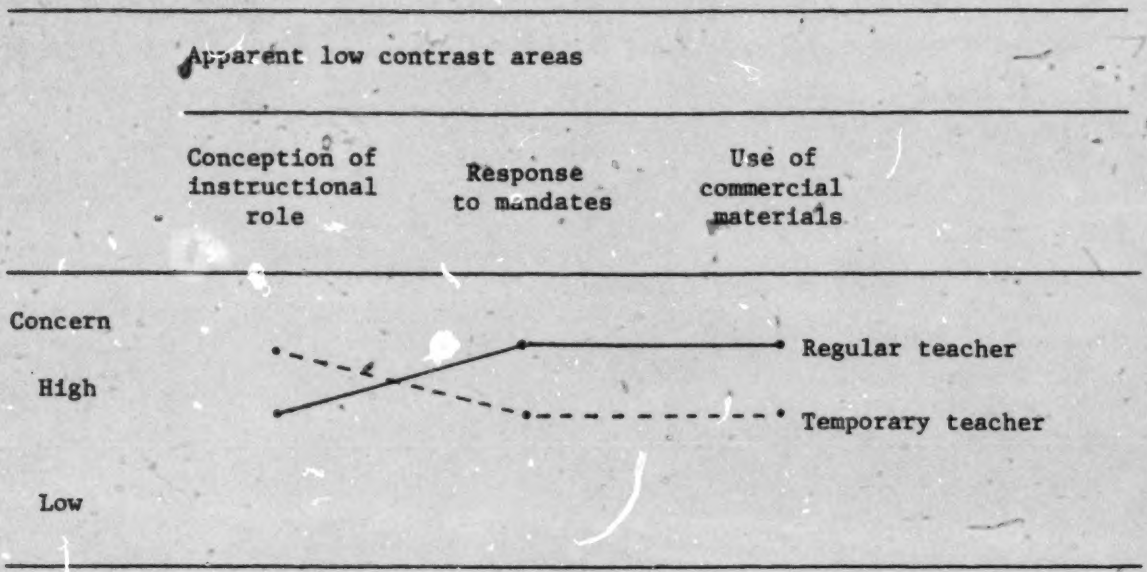

Figure 2. Areas of apparent low teacher contrast

used similar procedures, had similar styles in interacting with children, established pleasant but efficient environments, were task-oriented and academically-focused, used commercial materials efficiently, provided direct feedback to children, monitored pupil efforts carefully, grouped in standard ways, and provided differential instruction for top and bottom groups based upon their relative competence in word recognition and comprehension. In fact, if they had been subjects in a process-product study, the two teachers would have been found to be similar since they did employ many of the instructional behaviors typically noted in such studies.

However, because this was a naturalistic study that provided descriptive data regarding the instruction of the two teachers, it was possible to establish that, although the teachers were quite similar in the four low-contrast areas noted earlier, they were only superficially similar in the three areas noted above. The underlying differences in these three areas provide a qualitative contrast between the direct instruction of the two teachers.

Areas of High Contrast

While apparently similar in all ways, the two teachers were quite different in their conception of instructional role, responses to mandates, and use of commercial materials.

Conception of instructional role. Their respective conceptions of instructional role constituted the major contrast between the two teachers. This conception, in turn, was based on three sub-conceptions: (1) attitude toward teaching, (2) knowledge of the reading process, and (3) the nature of instruction.

As noted earlier, both teachers assumed a highly professional and dedicated *attitude toward teaching*. Nonetheless, there was a significant difference in their attitudes. The regular teacher repeatedly expressed a feeling of heavy responsibility for developing 'socialization' skills in her pupils. Observations revealed her engagement in such activities on several occasions. In contrast, the temporary teacher felt his primary task was to develop reading and language competence in pupils. He viewed socialization as a desirable, but not essential, prerequisite. Although the difference between the two teachers was a subtle one (both valued and attended to socialization needs), the temporary teacher saw socialization as desirable for enhancing the learning environment while the regular teacher saw socialization as a valued outcome in its own right. As a result, the temporary teacher gave more focus to academic goals.

The regular teacher viewed teaching as a process of guiding pupils through instructional materials. Since she believed materials were carefully structured by experts, she thought it best that teachers not alter the structure or sequence. In fact, to prepare to be a subject of the observational study she took her basal textbook home and studied the

teachers' guide. In contrast, the temporary teacher saw himself, not the basal, as having the responsibility for instruction. Consequently, he stated that his role was to adjust the sequence and/or the content of the basal text if, in his opinion, it was necessary in order to help the pupils understand what was being taught.

The regular teacher viewed instruction as something that occurred in response to pupil errors. As she monitored pupils through materials, she would question, probe, and ask for responses. The attitude was that pupils will usually learn while going through the text, but if an incorrect response is provided, she should then reactively insert corrective instruction. In contrast, the temporary teacher viewed instruction as the prevention of errors and he was seldom observed asking pupils for responses without first providing assistance in how to make such responses. His attitude was that if pupils do not know how to do something, they should be taught how and *then* assigned materials requiring such responses.

The two teachers were noticeably different in terms of *knowledge of the reading process*, not a surprising contrast considering the background experiences of the two subjects. Since this difference played a large role in the contrasts noted, however, it is important that is be substantiated.

The regular teacher's demonstrated knowledge of the reading process seldom went beyond that found in the basal text directives or in the basal text end-of-book tests. While somewhat critical of both on several occasions, she nevertheless tended to adhere to the recommendations of the commercial publisher. In contrast, the temporary teacher frequently used his understanding of the reading-language process to depart from basal directives. This was demonstrated in the following ways. For word recognition, he added contextual prediction as a skill when he noted its absence in the basal, he built lessons establishing the mutually supportive functions of sight vocabulary, contextual prediction, and phonics; he established a relationship between word recognition and fluency, and he instituted an integration of the word recognition and spelling efforts. For comprehension, he instituted both direct and indirect activities focusing on comprehension, he emphasized the message-sending/message-receiving function of language, and he created an integration between comprehending and composing efforts. For reading in general, he instituted sustained silent reading as a daily activity, incorporated regular language experience activities, and instituted routine sharing of children's literature.

In short, there were relatively massive curricular differences in the instruction provided by the two teachers that can be attributed to their differences in knowledge about reading. Even though the same basal textbooks were used by both teachers, the temporary teacher taught different things, adding elements, presenting other elements in different contexts, integrating language in various ways, and introducing reading-language activities that went beyond the boundaries of the commercial materials.

Of the three categories that distinguished the two teachers, the most complex was their respective *conceptions of the nature of instruction*.

The differences are described here in terms of the outcomes of instruction, the balance among various reading outcomes, the purpose of instruction, and design elements.

The two teachers had different views of the outcomes of instruction. While the regular teacher stated in an early interview that she strived to "raise their reading levels and to get them interested in reading," subsequent observations and self-report data provided little support for the latter outcome. Instead, it became clear that the pupil outcome valued by the teacher was success in completing the end-of-book test for the basal reader. The temporary teacher, in contrast, did not particularly value the completion of basal tests. Instead, he valued evidence of children responding positively to text and evidence that they were conscious of how to successfully apply the processes of language to reading and writing situations. He articulated these goals in terms of daily, weekly, and unit objectives integrated throughout reading, language, and spelling instruction. In short, the temporary teacher displayed a more complex, broadly integrated set of outcomes that he put into practice by organizing his planning around instructional objectives designed to lead logically and gradually to the attainment of these broad outcomes. While the regular teacher was driven by the objectives tested on the basal textbook tests, the temporary teacher was driven by a belief system regarding what a reader ought to be.

As the differences in outcomes suggest, the two teachers also differed in terms of the balance observed in their instructional programs. The regular teacher focused on textbook coverage of essentially isolated content areas (reading, language, and spelling). For instance, the priority she placed on textbook coverage is revealed in her statement about when she

allows pupils to read library books: "I have students read library books after other seatwork is finished. The amount of time varies for each child depending upon the amount and ease of the other work." In short, the textbook comes first. In contrast, the program of the temporary teacher included a wide range of activities, beginning first thing in the morning with sustained silent reading, book sharing, and language experience activities, moving to the more traditional reading group instruction later in the period. His concern for activities that counter the typical textbook activities is reflected in the following segment from his journal entry of January 29:

> It's more and more apparent to me that what you emphasize is what you get (sow seeds, harvest that crop, etc.). The kids are now more keenly aware of the fun of reading, of the communicative nature of reading, of acting like authors, and so on, because I emphasized it more than _____ did.

In addition to the different outcomes and perspectives on balance, the two teachers differed regarding the purpose of instruction. The regular teacher taught as if the purpose of instruction was to inculcate in pupils the procedures for using the textbook. For instance, note the procedural emphasis in the following quote from her self-study:

> Usually, I would introduce the words, have the students do the spelling workbook, send the words home, give them corrective feedback on the workbook and give a posttest.
>
> In teaching reading, I would follow the manual. An example is the lesson on Pat's School Picture in MICI. I introduced the vocabulary as suggested, had the children read the story at the table silently (I usually gave them a question at the beginning of each page and asked more questions at the end of the page), introduced the skills and assigned the worksheets and the workbook pages.

In contrast, the temporary teacher was frequently observed explicitly stating the "secret" for successfully doing a particular skill, modeling its use, highlighting it, and monitoring the pupils' use of it in subsequent instructional encounters. In other words, the instructional emphasis of the regular teacher seemed to focus on the procedure for completing the

activity itself and was, in that sense, activity-focused; the temporary teacher, in contrast, emphasized and tried to make explicit the internal processing used by successful readers and was, in that sense, metacognitive.

Finally, the two teachers differed in their use of components of instructional design. The regular teacher, in observation after observation, confined her activities to piloting pupils through the pages of the various textbooks, monitoring their responses and providing corrective feedback and spontaneous assistance in response to errors. There was little evidence that she employed instructional design elements. The temporary teacher, in contrast, seldom piloted pupils through instructional materials on an item-by-item, page-by-page basis. Instead, he used two distinct types of instructional presentations that preceded various types of pupil activity. The first was indirect in nature: It usually involved the daily activities of sustained silent reading, language experience, or book sharing and focused on arranging the environment to insure quality encounters with print, high expectations, positive attitudes, and an understanding of the integrated nature of language. The second was quite direct: It usually involved skill instruction and had two design components. One was the employment of a three-step instructional sequence that progressed from teaching the skill to guided application in context to independent use, a sequence requiring that, contrary to standard basal text formats, the skills associated with a selection should be taught first *and then* applied to the selection. The other was the employment of the specific attenders, tangible highlighting, and gradual fading of the metacognitive "secret" as noted above, a design feature that provided children with explicit assistance in the form of "crutches" that were gradually removed until they were able to independently apply the skill in text. In short, the regular teacher assumed that instruc-

tional design components were inherent in the materials and that she only needed to guide pupils through these materials and correct errors as they occurred; the temporary teacher, however, incorporated instructional design into direct and indirect presentations and manipulated both instructional sequence (to insure that pupils knew how to make responses before being placed in materials requiring such responses) and assistance devices (to insure that pupils received tangible, gradually faded help in applying the metacognitive secret).

In sum, because they used the same materials, the same groups, the same management procedures, and held similar views regarding careful monitoring of pupil work, the superficial examination of the two teachers' instruction might lead one to conclude that they shared similar conceptions of instructional role. In effect, however, the two teachers had divergent attitudes regarding teaching, possessed widely different levels of understanding of the reading process, and most important, exhibited vast differences regarding what instruction is, differences that were particularly noticeable in the outcomes they valued, the amount of balance evident in their programs, the purpose of their instruction, and the degree to which they employed instructional design components (see Figure 3).

Response to mandates. As noted earlier, both teachers felt a responsibility to be accountable in terms of curricular mandates as reflected in the curriculum guide and in school policy. Although at first this appeared to be an area of apparent low contrast, the two teachers exhibited a significant qualitative difference in response to mandates.

The difference regards the extent to which each teacher felt a need to adhere to "the letter of the law." The regular teacher was quite careful to adhere to the sequence of each textbook and to accomplish the mandates

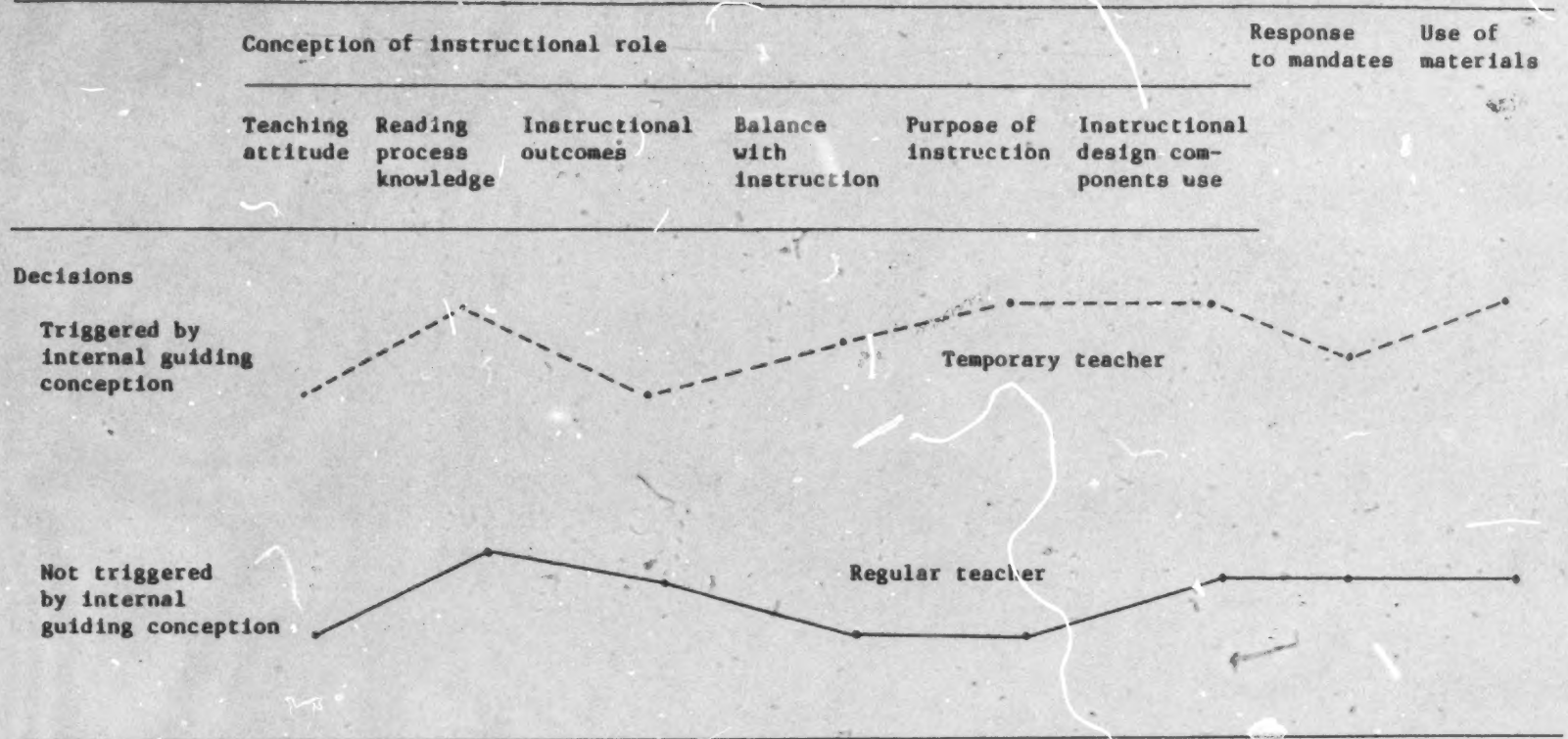

Figure 3. High contrast in conception of instructional role, response to mandates, and use of materials.

associated with each curricular area in separate periods of instruction. In contrast, the temporary teacher, while insuring that the objectives and policies specified by mandate were met, nevertheless frequently modified the sequence of instruction, integrated objectives from one curricular area with instruction in another, eliminated textbooks for some instruction and supplemented other instruction with tradebooks. In both cases, the mandates were achieved. The temporary teacher, however, frequently modified the sequence, the instructional setting, and the instructional tools in accordance with his own conception of the goals of reading and language instruction and in accordance with his perception of the most efficient way to teach a particular aspect of reading.

Use of commercial materials. Although each teacher did employ the commercial textbooks mandated by the school administration, there were substantial differences in the way the teachers used instructional materials. These can be discussed in terms of curricular and instructional design differences.

Regarding curriculum, the regular teacher limited content to that specified in the various texts and assumed that the sequence recommended by the text was the best possible one. Consequently, she taught what was specified in each of the three textbooks (reading, language, and spelling) in precisely the order specified. Her only variation was to assign a more difficult spelling textbook to the top reading group. Both the middle and low reading groups used the second-grade version of the spelling text, while all three groups used the second-grade language text (as a matter of standard school policy, each of the three reading groups used a different level book from the adopted reading series). In contrast, the temporary

teacher modified and supplemented both the content and the sequence specified in the textbooks. For instance, he initiated an instructional strand on contextual predication that was not recommended in the basal text; he followed certain recommendations for word-recognition instruction and modified others for both the middle- and low-reading groups; he eliminated use of the spelling text entirely for the low group, substituting a program of his own, and he seldom used the language text at all, integrating language objectives with other instructional content.

Regarding instructional design, the regular teacher assumed that the commercial materials incorporated the necessary components and concentrated on simply moving pupils through the activities in sequence. The temporary teacher, in contrast, made instructional presentations, and manipulated the instructional sequence and embedded assistance features to insure student attention.

In summary, the two teachers, while making use of the mandated commercial texts, differed markedly in how they used them. The regular teacher allowed the commercial materials to dictate what was to be taught and seldom was observed supplementing these materials in terms of either curriculum or instructional design features. In contrast, the temporary teacher frequently modified the curricular content and routinely added instructional design features not inherent in the textbooks.

The Findings

Three kinds of comparisons were made: low contrast differences, apparent similarities, and high contrast differences. In the first, the two teachers were quite similar in professional concern, efficiency and time-on-task elements, grouping and related decisions, and differential instruction in high and low reading groups. In the second comparison they *appeared* to be

similar in terms of their instructional roles, their response to mandates, and their use of materials, but the descriptive data revealed that they were actually quite different in these areas. They took different attitudes toward teaching, exhibited different levels of understanding about the reading process itself and possessed different views of what constitutes instruction. They responded qualitatively in different ways to curricular mandates and made different use of required textbooks. These differences are reflected in Figure 3 and in the two case studies (see appendix).

Regarding the research questions themselves, the instruction of the two teachers was undeniably 'direct' in the sense that both met the criteria suggested by process-product research. However, there were substantial differences in both their instructional behavior (question #1) and their conceptions regarding the nature and function of instruction (question #2). Hence, the process-product concept of 'direct instruction' captures only part of the act of instruction and does not include most of the qualitative differences that distinguished these two teachers. This study suggests, in short, that there are at least two types of 'direct instruction' and that the concept is not uniformly interpreted.

It is necessary to point out once again, however, that despite the qualitative differences in the two teachers, this study offers no data regarding which teacher was most effective in producing achievement gains. The questions of whether the regular teacher's 'direct instruction' was more effective than the 'direct instruction' of the temporary teacher or vice versa must await further study.

Discussion

When considered as a single study of only two teachers conducted over a short period in a unique school outside the continental United States,

this study has limited implications. When considered as one of a growing number of naturalistic studies of classroom instruction described in similar terms, it takes on a larger significance. Consequently, the discussion which follows, while specifically stimulated by the study described herein, is presented within the larger context of the work of Anderson (Note 1); Duffy and McIntyre (Note 2); Durkin (1979); Fisher, Berliner, Filby, Marliave, Cahen, and Dishaw (1980) at the Far West Laboratory as part of the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study; Joyce (Note 3) and Morine-Dershimer (Note 4) in the South Bay studies; and the multitude of other naturalistic classroom studies conducted over the past five years by various research groups housed at the Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University.

Descriptive research generally raises questions and suggests hypotheses; this study raises questions about the nature of instruction, particularly direct instruction, as employed in primary grade reading. Toward this end, the discussion is organized into four sets of questions: the limits of direct instruction as a concept, methodological implications for research on reading comprehension instruction, conceptualizing instruction, and the relative roles of materials and teachers.

The Concept of Direct Instruction

The first question raised by this study concerns the limits of the direct instruction concept itself. The frequently-used term of comprehention instruction is exemplified in the following quotes by Pearson, Hansen, and Gordon (1979) and by Pearson and Camperell (in press):

> What needs to be demonstrated is that students with weak schemata, given direct instruction for concepts about the topic to be read, subsequently comprehend more like students who come to the task with strong schemata. (p. 207)

> The next step is to demonstrate that poor readers who receive direct instruction in deciphering an author's organizational plan improve in their ability to produce greater vertical comprehension and recall of text. (in press)

The illusion created by such frequent reference to direct instruction is that a shared conceptual understanding of the term exists. Our study suggests otherwise. Direct instruction, as described in various syntheses of the process-product studies, constituted only a managerial underpinning for both teachers--a kind of technical competence that insured pupil engagement. The qualitative instructional dimensions that distinguished the work of the two teachers went well beyond the characteristics of this process-product brand of direct instruction and, by the same token, were different than the direct instruction model of Becker, Engleman, and Carnine (1979). Clearly, direct instruction means different things to different people. The frequent reference to direct instruction as a way to approach comprehension instruction suggests an illusion of consensus that masks the qualitative differences actually associated with the term.

Methodological Concerns

This study also raises the question of whether comprehension instruction can be experimentally researched in the absence of a conceptual consensus about what is meant by direct instruction. It is crucial that research on comprehension instruction begin with a clear understanding of *which* concept of direct instruction is being employed.

Beyond this, however, the methodological question includes the specificity (or the lack thereof) with which instruction is described in the procedures sections of comprehension research. It is not unusual, for instance, for such research to confine descriptions of instructional procedures to the fact that "training will be teacher-led" without specifying

the nature of the interaction between teacher and pupils. Similarly, it is not unusual to see studies in which descriptions of instructional treatments are confined to the statement that the directions provided were varied. This casual approach to the nature of instruction is reflected in grant proposals that plan to study instructional presentation formats and training in reading strategies but fail to specify the nature of either. Similarly, published studies often fail to provide instructional details. For instance, Cohen and Stover's (1981) description of instruction is parsimonious about such instructional details as the substance of the explanations, the details of the demonstration, and the principles guiding the question-asking procedure:

> The programmed materials explained the task, demonstrated it and then provided practice with immediate feedback. When the feedback was negative, the teacher used a questioning procedure to guide the student through the practice item until the student understood how to manipulate the format variable. (p. 191)

While replication concerns are relevant here, this is not the core of the difficulty since interested scholars would hopefully be able to obtain from technical reports greater detail about the nature of the "training" provided. Deeper yet is the concern about what such casual treatment of the instructional variable in studies reveals about researchers' assumptions of instructional research. The differences in the two teachers described here vividly demonstrate that qualitative differences in teacher-pupil instructional interactions exist. Yet, procedural statements of the research fail to note such differences. Isn't the absence of instructional detail a potentially serious methodological weakness that confounds rather than elucidates research findings?

The Nature of Instruction

The vague and general descriptions of instruction appearing in research reports suggest that researchers' understanding of instruction itself may

be shallow. This suspicion, triggered by the observed differences in the two teachers, is reinforced by previous studies that ask serious questions about the nature of reading instruction (Duffy & McIntyre, Note 2; Durkin, 1979).

The questions raised here cover four issues of the nature of instruction: should the teacher instruct and assist student learning, what should be taught, what should be the purpose of such instruction, and how should subjects be taught.

Should teachers instruct and assist? While neither teacher in the study had any reservations about *whether* they should teach, both were sensitive to the fact that, in reading, much energy is devoted to debates about the appropriateness of engaging in instruction at all. At one end of the spectrum, Becher, Engleman, and Thomas (1971) argue that "teaching is making learning happen." At the other end various educators argue that learning to read is a spontaneous or naturally-occurring phenomenon in which language should be allowed to evolve free of instructional constraints. While the process-product research and other direct-instruction work has de-emphasized the latter position in recent years, the argument is still vigorously offered by a variety of reading educators. It is reasonable to hypothesize that at least part of the conceptual confusion regarding the nature of instruction is rooted in debates over whether instruction should occur at all. To clarify the situation, conceptual perspectives must be defined and subjected to careful descriptive and subsequent experimental study. Clarity in researchers' thinking about instruction is not likely to occur if the debate continues without the benefit of such close examination.

A similar question can be asked about the assistance role to be played by the teacher. Both teachers wanted to assist but the temporary teacher

provided more tangible examples of assistance behavior. However, as noted by Duffy, Lanier, and Roehler (in press), the instructional implications of comprehension research are often discussed as if the teacher was not an issue at all and as if the only interaction that counted in instruction was the one between the child and text. Duffy (Note 5), however, suggests that instruction is a triad involving child, text, and teacher interactions, and Roehler and Duffy (Note 6) argue that the unique function of the teacher in this interaction is to provide tangible assistance to learners that enhances their chances for success. A divergent position is taken by Harste and Carey (1979) when they argue that the teacher's role should be much less obstrusive, focusing primarily on insuring that the child has quality encounters with print. Whichever position or combination of positions is correct, it illustrates again the conceptual diversity associated with reading instruction and argues the need for more precision in researchers' thinking about comprehension instruction.

What to teach. Once determining that instruction is desirable, the question becomes one of what to teach. Both teachers described here were obviously concerned with this issue, one depending heavily on textbook prescriptions and the other modifying such prescriptions by reference to his own conception of the nature of reading. Both, however, clearly viewed the question as a prerequisite to a how-to question. Reading educators, however, are often preoccupied with the content to be taught. While deciding what to teach in comprehension is important, lumping *what* to teach (a curriculum issue) with *how* to teach (an instruction issue) indicates the conceptual imprecision of instructional issues. Failure to be more precise contributes to confounding results of research on comprehension instruction.

The purpose of teaching. Another major difference in the two teachers was in the apparent purposes of teaching what they did. For instance, when teaching a skill, the regular teacher apparently focused on procedural concerns associated with maneuvering pupils through instructional materials while the temporary teacher strived to use the metacognitive concept (Brown, Campione,& Day, 1981) to create for the child a conscious awareness of the cues used by proficient readers so that these could be applied in a constructive manner to create meaning from text. In short, he attempted to make explicit for pupils the text processing strategies that more proficient pupils use without conscious awareness. He was making the implicit explicit, the unconscious conscious. Whether this is the right way to teach comprehension skills is again an empirical question that must be momentarily deferred. The point is that here is yet another example of the need for researchers to clarify their thinking about instruction.

Equally confusing, and no doubt contributing to the lack of conceptual clarity about instruction, is the apparent failure to distinguish purposes regarding two prevalent types of reading instruction. One purpose is teaching pupils *how to* read, an activity that absorbs almost the total efforts of the regular teacher in this study. The other, *reading to learn*, an activity seldom observed in the work of the regular teacher, was sometimes seen in that of the temporary teacher. The data for the temporary teacher indicate that the two activities may well demand two distinctive types of instruction. In the first, the objective is to teach pupils how to process text, developing within them a set of problem-solving strategies that they then can apply or transfer to the new texts they read by themselves. In the second, the objective is to help the child get the information and/or understanding from the text he/she is currently reading. The latter is context-specific and calls for text processing strategies such as those

specified in Tierney and Pearson (1981). The former calls for making explicit the implicit principles that govern text processing so that students can consciously apply them to a variety of other situations. Clarity regarding the two types of reading activity and associated instructional efforts would aid efforts to conceptualize the nature of instruction.

How to teach. Following from those questions is *how* instructional interactions should occur. Research on classroom practice is clear regarding what actually happens, indicating that virtually all instructional interaction consists of the teacher asking a question, a student replying, and the teacher evaluating the answer (Mehan, 1979; Durkin, 1979; Duffy & McIntyre, Note 2), a process Dunkin and Biddle (1974) call "simple reciprocation."

The problem here is whether such interactions constitute teaching or practice. The study of the two teachers highlights this distinction. While the regular teacher emphasized monitoring, the temporary teacher preceded such practice with explanatory presentations that attempted to show pupils how to do tasks before they were asked to practice them. Is teaching the same as practice or is practice something that *follows* teaching? To intelligently study comprehension instruction, educators must make such conceptual distinctions.

Another important how-to question regards the sequence of instructional interaction. The regular teacher followed the traditional basal text format of introducing and reading the basal story and then "teaching" the associated workbook and worksheet skill pages. In contrast, the temporary teacher's sequence began with instruction in the skill itself, moved to helping pupils use the skill in the context of the basal, and finally shifted to having them apply it independently. There is currently

no way to know which sequence is best, but the existence of various ways to sequence instructional interactions highlights again the need for careful conceptualization prior to conducting research on comprehension instruction.

Finally, the two teachers in the study differed noticeably in their respective use of instructional design elements. The regular teacher used few and depended heavily on textbook practice and drill; the temporary teacher distinguished between presentations and practice, routinely providing specific attenders, modeling, highlighting, and fading during presentations prior to providing practice. Again, the immediate question is not which teacher was right; the question is whether such design differences are clearly conceptualized and adequately controlled relative to research on comprehension instruction.

In light of the above four areas, it becomes clear that unanswered questions exist about the nature of instruction itself as well as the nature of direct instruction. Emerging studies of comprehension instruction ought to be based on clear conceptualizations regarding such issues.

The Relative Roles of Teachers and Materials

The contrast between the two teachers in their respective use of instructional materials can be seen in the two case studies (see appendix). The regular teacher heavily depended on them while the temporary teacher used them as a starting point. The regular teacher tended to equate instruction with taking pupils through the materials while the temporary teacher saw instruction as something that he was uniquely capable of supplying. This distinction raises questions regarding the relationship of teachers and materials.

First, is instruction (or *ought* it to be) embodied in the commercial materials used in reading. Past descriptive research (Durkin, 1979;

Duffy & McIntyre, Note 2; Fisher, et al., 1980) and the study of the regular teacher described here seem to show that many teachers *do* believe commercial materials embody the instruction and that instruction is essentially a process of piloting pupils' progress through these materials. Similarly, the process-product findings seem to associate teacher effectiveness with the ability to efficiently employ a well-structured piece of instructional material so that high pupil engagement rates, high success, brisk pace, and specific feedback result (Duffy, Note 5). Whether teachers or materials are responsible for instruction (or, if it is shared, how the responsibility is split) is central to any carefully conceived research on comprehension instruction.

The data on the temporary teacher suggest that teachers are capable of improving upon the materials, tailoring them to the particular needs of children. The data on the regular teacher (as well as the data generated in other previously-cited descriptive research) suggest that materials dominate teachers. Presumably, this is why the Oregon direct-instruction model (Becker, Engleman, & Carnine, 1979) offers no apologies for preparing scripts for teachers. Even researchers who argue that teachers are decision makers suggest that the instructional act itself can be technically controlled (Lanier & Shulman, Note 7). Given the complexities of the instructional act, the question arises whether educators should deliberately set out to create materials that assume full instructional responsibility. The work being done by DISTAR and by computer science researchers at the University of Illinois (Siegel, Note 8) indicates that the capacity to do so already exists. The only question is "*Should* we?"

Finally, the issue of incorporating instruction into teacher scripts that are, in essence, "teacher proof," raises three final issues. The

first is the elitism associated with any proposal to take decision making out of the hands of teachers; the implication is that teachers cannot be entrusted with instruction. Second, there is the issue of teacher professionalism; are teachers still professionals if their instructional responsibilities are reduced to monitoring pupil progress? Third, if teachers operated from scripts, how would such a fundamental change in instructional responsibilities affect teacher education and the current elaborate system of preservice and inservice certification procedures?

The contrasts between the two teachers' use of instructional materials highlights the close relationship that exists between teachers, materials, and pupils. It simultaneously reminds educators that they do not know where the responsibility for instruction lies or, if the responsibility *does* lie with materials, what this leaves for the teacher. These issues necessitate clear thinking about instruction as it relates to comprehension research.

So, the state of knowledge about instruction is murky, contradictory, and imprecise, and raises questions about the precision with which researchers approach comprehension instruction.

Summary

The concept of instruction must become clearer and less illusive. Although the illusion persists that researchers share an understanding of terms such as instruction and direct instruction, the contrast in the two teachers reported in this paper repudiates this and illustrates the qualitative differences that can exist in instruction.

Two important points must be made in conclusion. The first concerns the emerging research on comprehension instruction and the second concerns teacher education.

Researchers cannot afford to embark upon a decade of comprehension instruction based on an illusion. They must conceptualize and empirically test a variety of direct instruction models that can be systematically applied when conducting comprehension research. We feel that this field needs careful, analytical thinking about instruction, particularly as it relates to reading comprehension.

Researchers must consider teacher education's role in producing teachers whose instruction is limited to piloting pupils through commercial materials. The regular teacher in this study, like other teachers, is a dedicated professional. She does what she does because she thinks that's what she is supposed to do. The instructional methodology (or lack of it) being taught to prospective and inservice teachers at teacher training institutions warrants examination. Only when teacher educators provide programs that show teachers the differences between monitoring and explicating can they expect teachers in the classroom to do more than monitoring.

Direct instruction can mean many things. Instruction that is intentional and direct will be more effective than instruction that is incidental or oblique. However, as this study illustrates, direct instruction is *not* a single concept; it can be interpreted in many ways. Reading educators and researchers must become more precise about the nature of these various interpretations and determine which elements of instruction are most effective and which are less so.

Appendix

LIMITED CASE STUDY 1: REGULAR TEACHER

Background

Teacher 1 began her teaching career in the Midwest as a teacher of grades two through five. After four and one-half years of state-side teaching, she accepted a position in an American school overseas where she is in her third year as a second-grade teacher. She works long hours, frequently arriving at school before 8 a.m. and leaving after 5:30 p.m. She demonstrates patience, tact, and humanism in her interactions with her 25 pupils, who represent a variety of international cultures (although no serious ESL[4] problems exist). She has a strong science background, her ultimate professional goal is to work in staff development, and she is pursuing a masters degree in education. Perhaps as a result of her background and professional goal, she is the designated leader of her grade-level team, a responsibility that she pursues with vigor, skill, and sensitivity.

The conclusions of this study are based on twelve observations made by two participant observers during seven school days in January. All observations were conducted in the morning and most occurred during the language arts and reading session.

Instructional Goals in Reading

In an interview, Teacher 1 reported that her instructional goals were "to raise their (the pupils') reading levels and to get them interested in reading." In practice, her goals seem to be tied to the commercial texts being used. This is consistent with the school's curriculum guide, which states that teachers should teach children the content of the textbooks

[4]ESL: English as a second language

that have been adopted for reading, language, and spelling. She reported that she did not use a specific list of objectives in planning instruction and observations indicated that the sequence of instructional events followed the textbook sequence explicitly. However, Teacher 1 was not concerned simply with covering the text; she spent considerable time in leading her team to re-group pupils to use new reading texts when she felt (primarily on the basis of the results of basal text tests) that they had demonstrated the ability to move to a higher level even though they had not finished a previous book. Hence, her goal of "raising reading levels" was effected by moving pupils from book to book based on their ability to successfully complete basal tests. While raising levels seemed to be a dominant consideration, "getting them interested in reading" was not as easily observed. In fact, time was not specifically allocated to this goal during the observations and, in an interview, Teacher 1 reported that book sharing was something "I used to do with the upper grades but not with second graders."

Role of Materials

During the periods observed, Teacher 1 used the basal reader, the language text, and the spelling text in the sequence recommended by each text publisher and, as far as the observers could determine, the teaching procedures used by the teacher were those recommended by each text. Each skill or activity was completed and each was carefully monitored. While there were three reading groups using three different books representing a difficulty span from grade one to grade three, 11 children received simultaneous instruction from the same second-grade language text and the two lowest groups used the same second-grade spelling text. There was no

evidence of integration of content among the various language areas nor was there any other divergence from the content of the individual textbooks.

Typical Activities

Teacher 1's daily activities were well organized and quickly paced, and she covered much material each day. Activities centered around the commercial texts. Typically, the language book and spelling book were assigned as seatwork following a brief period of introduction and direction giving. Reading typically followed the standard basal text format of introducing the story, reading it, discussing it, and completing associated skill and/or workbook pages. Seatwork consisted predominately of language and reading skill sheets, although some exceptions were noted (as when, on one occasion, the highest reading groups completed and shared their own language experience stories). The standard procedure, however, was large group instruction in language and spelling directed toward the completion and corrective monitoring of exercise pages, small-group instruction of basal text stories using a "question-and-answer" format and small group completion and corrective monitoring of skill lessons.

Conception of Instructional Role

Three considerations seemed to dominate Teacher 1's conception of her instructional role. The first was her responsibility for teaching the children the content of the required textbooks and for carefully monitoring these activities to determine who was doing well and who was not. Second, she was noticeably concerned with pupils' total development in a manner that went well beyond simple academics. For instance, she frequently spoke about her responsibility for providing "socialization activities" for the children serviced by this overseas school and she organized her day to

insure that opportunities for informal socializing were available. Finally, Teacher 1 was concerned with providing a low-key but orderly and business-like environment during those times designated for academics. While she did not use the term "time-on-task," concern for this dimension of instruction seemed to be implicit in her work.

These three considerations were part of a larger conception best characterized as professional confidence. Teacher 1 acted with certainty and directedness in her work. She was articulate, her comments reflected self-understanding and her approach to her work was forthright and confident. She neither pretended to have all the answers nor felt a need to be apologetic.

Patterns of "Assisted Learning"

Teacher 1's patterns of instruction were basically reactive in nature. The lesson pattern began with giving directions for an exercise page, demonstrating one or two items (but not involving pupils in a modeling format), asking pupils if they understood, and then directing them to complete the seatwork individually. When students completed such assignments incorrectly, the teacher tried to assist by initiating a recitation session. For instance, when pupils erred on a workbook assignment involving the selection of the correct definition from multiple meanings provided by the dictionary, the following progression was noted (T=teacher, S(s)=student(s):

T: What do you see at the top of the page?

S: Dictionary

T: That's correct. The sentences on the bottom of the page use words from this dictionary. We'll read all the meanings and decide which one fits. We'll listen for clues to help us out. Miguel, read the first sentence.

S: (Reads sentence aloud.)

T: Before you go to the dictionary, can you picture the sentence?

Ss: Yes.

T: What's in a tool box? (Tools.) Someone put them on a bench. What is another word for bench?

S: . . . Work table. . . chair.

T: Let's look at bench at the top of page___. What is it?

S: Long chair.

T: (Reads second meaning aloud.) What is the clue?

S: Work table.

T: Does that give you any clues?

Ss: Yes.

T: What does the sentence do?

S: (Responds.)

T: It gives you an example. Let's read the third meaning to see if that has anything to do with the sentence's meaning. Now, which meaning is correct for this sentence?

S: Number two.

T: I think "tools" is the clue. If you didn't have number two, mark it.

While the teacher mentions clues, note that pupils receive little explicit assistance regarding how to independently recognize and use such clues when trying to determine the meaning of other words. This excerpt took five minutes. The process continued in the same manner for the other items for a total of 13 minutes. The teachor concluded, "I think you weren't thinking about the sentences. Be sure to do that. Now, look over the answers and correct any you find. Be sure to look for the clues in the sentence."

Another example occurred during a lesson on determining the main idea of a paragraph. Several students had completed the workbook page incor-

rectly and the teacher brought this group together, talked about the page, and asked them to read the first paragraph. Again, the format was recitation and children were not provided with specific explanations, modeling, cues, or other forms of assistances.

T: Tell me in your own words what this paragraph is all about.

S: She remembered something.

T: Is that what you thought the paragraph was about? Let's read it aloud again.

Ss: (Read it aloud and agreed.)

T: Read the second paragraph.

Ss: (Read it silently.)

T: Tell me in your own words what it is about. Sarah?

S: (Recites the whole paragraph.)

T: Can anyone tell me in one sentence? Chris?

S: Children were looking for Mrs. Peachum's house.

T: Is it Mrs. Peachum? Kim?

S: Children were looking for a number on a house.

T: Read the first sentence aloud, together.

Ss: (Read it aloud.)

T: That's what the paragraph is about.

The students read the next paragraph silently. One student responded that the first sentence was the main idea. Students were told to correct their papers and to hand them in. This corrective lesson took six minutes.

In the above and other such instructional sessions, it was clear that the teacher's intention was to be of assistance to children; her desire to have the children succeed and her humanism in carrying out the instruction was evident. However, the usual instructional pattern began with assigning

materials following brief demonstrations; corrective instruction of the responses was provided after completion. Such instruction normally followed a recitation format; specific attenders, cues, highlighting, and other forms of instructional assistance were seldom observed. Much the same pattern was evident in non-skill situations as when the children did a language textbook activity on creative drama: Little instruction was provided prior to the activity and, when the activities did not go according to plan, the teacher intervened in a gentle, humanistic but nevertheless reactive way, providing directions for completing the activity, but with no instruction on how to create drama situations that would avoid such difficulties.

Summary

Teacher 1 is a diligent, highly-organized, and efficient teacher. Her interactions with children reflect a sensitivity and a depth of understanding for their well-being. Further evidence of her dedication in this regard is her leadership in insuring correct reading placement for all 75 pupils in the team. Her observed instructional behavior suggests that she believes her responsibility is three fold: First, she must insure that children master the content of the various adopted texts; second, she should insure that the classroom environment allows for the engaged time-on-task needed to achieve mastery and, third, she must carefully monitor pupil responses to the textbook assignments to insure mastery. Though she relies on the textbooks, she does not hesitate to make grouping decisions based on test results rather than simple coverage. However, she seldom deviates from the text recommendations regarding what should be taught, how it should be taught, or the materials to use when teaching it. In sum, Teacher 1 makes independent and quite sophisticated professional decisions regarding

her pupils' emotional and social development and their proper placement in reading texts (although this latter is of less concern in language and spelling) but she relies more heavily on the textbooks for decisions about what should be taught and the context within which it will be taught.

LIMITED CASE STUDY 2: TEMPORARY TEACHER

Background

Teacher 2 is in his mid-forties and has been a professor of reading instruction at a major Midwestern university for 14 years. Previously, he taught grades three through six for eight years in both public and laboratory schools in New York State. The data for this study were collected when he assumed for five weeks the responsibility for classroom language-arts instruction in a second grade, handling all instructional responsibilities during the morning sessions for that period. The school was located in an English-speaking, expatriate community overseas, serving the K - 12 educational needs of children from a variety of international backgrounds. Twenty-five pupils were in the class. While English was a second language for approximately one third of the pupils, there were no debilitating ESL problems.

Instructional Goals in Reading

Teacher 2's instructional goals were (1) to develop a positive response to reading and language as recreational activities and functional tools and (2) to develop a consciousness in pupils regarding both how the language process works and how to successfully apply the skills of language and reading. An analysis of his instructional time allocation revealed how these goals were met. During the first forty minutes of each instructional day, and in approximately half of the seatwork, the teacher typically aimed at achieving the first goal while the remainder of the instructional and seatwork time (varying from approximately 60 to 120 minutes depending upon

the special-subjects schedule and averaging 75 minutes) he devoted to both skill work in language, spelling, and reading and to guided reading and writing activities. Approximately 75% of the instructional time in reading skills work was devoted to fluency and automaticity in identifying words, although this varied from sub-group to sub-group. (In an interview, the teacher reported that the top group received proportionately more comprehension instruction because they were already fluent word processors while the lowest group received proportionately more word recognition help because their lack of confidence in identifying words prevented them from concentrating on comprehension.) The teacher emphasized that instant recognition of words was the primary goal of word identification and that predicting words from context was the first strategy to use when an unknown word is encountered. The low- and middle groups also received instruction (approximately one-third of their word recognition time) on phonic blending of short vowel phonogram patterns, a strategy used in combination with contextual prediction to identify an unknown word. Both teacher-made texts and commercial texts (usually the basal) were used in guided reading instruction. Invariably, the teacher appeared to guide pupils to use in context the skills that had just been taught, or to guide them to be conscious about the nature of the langage process and the appropriate strategies to use.

Further evidence of the teacher's instructional goals are reflected in the specific skills, abilities, and attitudes he chose to monitor carefully through record keeping devices.

Role of Materials

Teacher 2 used the commercial materials mandated by the school and, consistent with the curriculum goals of the school, insured that the

specific objectives associated with the reading, language, and spelling textbooks were taught. However, he deviated from the standard use of these materials in several ways. First, while he used the objectives, he organized and taught them by units rather than by individual lessons or by stories. Second, he frequently pretested pupils on specific skills and, if the student already had acquired the skill, he eliminated that skill instruction for that pupil. Rarely, if ever, did he use the instructional suggestions provided in the teacher's guides. Instead he substituted his own pattern of pupil assistance (see following sections). Fourth, he often manipulated the suggested sequence of instruction recommended in one commercial text (such as the language text) so that it coincided with the teaching of a particular skill in another text (such as the basal reader), thereby encouraging the integration of language modes. Finally, he did not use the spelling textbook with the lowest group because they were sometimes unable to identify in print, much less spell, the suggested words. He substituted, instead, spelling lessons in which he taught the pupils to spell words they had first been taught to read, emphasizing visual memory for phonetically inconsistent words and phonic blending for the consistent words.

Typical Activities

Teacher 2's daily activities followed a rather predictable pattern. The first activity was always pupil (and teacher) sustained silent reading of self selected trade books. Initially, this activity lasted only eight minutes, but it gradually increased to 15 minutes as pupils began to sustain their silent reading. The second activity focused on both pupils and teacher sharing of favorite books and poems. Most of these were trade books although the teacher also encouraged (and pupils shared) pupil-written materials. Two

or three times a week, the teacher expanded this sharing period into a language experience activity in which children's literature selections were used as springboards to pupil writing activities. The next activity was a brief (usually no more than five to ten minutes) monitoring and individual help session in which seatwork was assigned, pupils were reminded about incomplete work, and those whose papers from the previous day were incorrect were provided with corrective feedback and instructions for completing the assignment correctly. The teacher then called one or another group for instruction (no regular order was followed). He occasionally combined two groups or parts of two groups depending upon the objective and pupils' performances. Typically, he met with all three groups each day, and emphasized several objectives spanning reading, language, and spelling in a single session (for example, two subjects, such as spelling and reading, were often taught at the same time when the objectives could be integrated together). Within each group, the typical activity depended upon whether the teacher's goal was to assess a pupil's instructional needs (in which the teacher merely monitored pupil responses), to present new skills or other instructional objectives (typically following the "assisted learning" pattern described below) or to guide application (typically using textual material to help children apply in context understandings and skills previously developed).

Conception of Instructional Role

Teacher 2 saw himself as responsible for actively assisting pupils and tangibly easing their efforts in both learning the skills of communication and in developing the desire to use these skills in daily life. He felt that, to accomplish this instructional function, his work must reflect four explicit characteristics. First, he was conscious of the ultimate language/

reading goals he wished his pupils to achieve and his instructional planning emphasized the objectives that lead to such goals. Second, he allocated his instructional time and established teacher-pupil expectancies to reflect these goals. Third, he organized the curricular content to expedite the individual needs of pupils and, within this context, the integrated nature of language. Finally, he presented instruction so that pupils received clear and tangible assistance as a means of achieving, with a minimum of failure, the objectives (and, ultimately, the goals) that he conceived to be the outcomes of language instruction.

Patterns of Assisted Learning

Assisting pupils' learning was a central focus for Teacher 2. He assisted in two related ways.

He conceived of language instruction as being organized in an "objective to guided-application to ultimate use" sequence and, as such, he planned all his instruction in terms of this sequence. In operation, this meant that he altered the nearly universal pattern for using the basal text from one of "teach the story, teach the skill, enrich" to one of "teach the skill, help pupils use the skill in context, and then show them how it can be used in 'real communication'."

Second, he believed that any objective that is new to the child requires a presentation by the teacher to create in the pupil an understanding of how to do a task previously unknown. This presentation ought to either precede or be concurrent with the use of the skill in context and should incorporate the following steps: a statement of the objective to be accomplished, the difficulty of the task, and the salient features to be attended to in order to understand how to do the task; a series of progressive pupil responses

proceding from simple to complex and from more tangible teacher assistance to less teacher assistance; and a practice activity to solidify the learning.

The following transcript of a main idea lesson, taught by Teacher 2 to the top group (nine pupils) is illustrative of the presentations he typically employed.

T: What we're doing today is very hard. Put down your pencils because it is hard. What we're going to learn is what the main idea is. We have to figure out what is the main thing the author is saying. The author says lots of things but there's a big main idea and often it's not stated; you have to figure it out. The way to do it is to decide how all the things are alike. We'll start with a list (Teacher refers to a list of "cat, dog, elephant" on the chalkboard). I say to myself, "How are these all alike? They are all animals."

S: They all have four legs.

T: That could be another main idea. (Teacher refers to list--elephant, zebra, monkey--on the chalkboard). Let's see how all these are alike. I could say they are all animals too, but there may be more ways they are alike. I say to myself that they are all . . .

S: Zoo animals.

T: Good. How else are they alike?

S: They all eat food.

T: Yes, but how is this list different from the first one?

S: They're jungle animals.

T: Pamela?

S: They have tails.

T: Yes, but is that different from these animals (indicates first list)? Let's try another list. How are these alike? (Refers to list--cow, pig, horse--on the chalkboard.)

S: They're farm animals.

T: Other ways?

S: They all work on a farm.

T: Chris?

S: They all die to make meat.

T: Good. Now let's look at these four words. (Teacher refers to list--baseball, soccer, basketball, football--on the chalkboard.) How are these all alike? What is the main idea?

S: They're all games.

T: Good. Others?

S: They all use balls.

T: Good. Pamela?

S: They're all sports.

T: Yes. What's being talked about here are games that are all sports that are all played with a ball.

(Researcher's note: This procedure continues with two additional lists in which the teacher has pupils establish the main idea without assistance. Teacher then refers to a paragraph printed on the chalkboard.)

T: Now let's make it harder. Now let's put it into a paragraph. This is harder. Read the paragraph aloud with me. (Pupils read short paragraph aloud in unison with the teacher.) Now I'll show you how to pick out the main idea. First, I will underline the main words. (Teacher underlines words and phrases within the paragraph.) Now I'll put these in a list just like those other lists we've been working with. (Teacher lists the underlined words and phrases beneath the paragraph.) Now I look at the words in the list and I say to myself, "How are these all alike?"

S: It tells all about the airplane.

T: Good. The main idea is all about the airplane. Now let me show you how to do this with other paragraphs. (Teacher passes out ditto sheet with five paragraphs, two of which are crossed out). Let's look at the second paragraph. I have underlined some of the words to help you pick out the main idea. First, read the paragraph.

Ss: (Read paragraph silently.)

T: Now, what words are underlined?

Ss: (Respond by indicating underlined sections.)

T: Now, I'll show you how to figure out the main idea. Think of these underlined words as listed like the ones on the board. Say to yourself, "How are all these alike?"

S: They're all talking about megaphones.

T: Yes, so, what's the main idea, Pamela?

S: (No reponse.)

T: Pam, if they're all talking about megaphones, what's the main idea of the paragraph?

S: (No response.)

T: It's what the paragraph is talking about that is the main idea, Pam. So the main idea is about megaphones. Let's try another. (Teacher indicates the third paragraph on the worksheet.) I underlined the main words again. You read the paragraph silently. Look at the underlined words and see if you can figure out the main idea by seeing how they're all alike.

Ss: (Read silently.)

T: Sarah.

S: They're talking about sound.

T: What else?

S: How sound travels.

T: Good. Now look at the fifth paragraph. We're skipping the fourth one because it's too hard. In this one, I only underlined the main word in the first line. You have to underline the main words in the other lines. Do that and look here when you're done.

Ss: (Read and underline silently.)

T: All right. Now that you've got the underlining done, make a list. What are all the underlined words mainly about? Chrystyna?

S: Moths and butterflies and how they're different.

T: Good. Now, I'm going to pass out another ditto, which is almost like the one we just did. I want Stephanie, Pamela, Miguel, and Kimberly to stay here with me. The rest of you, return to your seats and complete the sheet. You see that there are five paragraphs and that I did all the underlining in the first two, some at the beginning of the next two and none in the last. You should write the main idea for each paragraph in the space underneath and put it on my desk when you're done. (Teacher dismisses this group of five and re-

organizes the remaining four so they are sitting closer to him.) O.K., we'll do this first one together. Read the paragraph, think how the underlined words are alike and write what you think the main idea is in the space.

Ss: (Read silently and write on paper)

T: (Visually inspects written answers.) You all seem to have it. Let's try the second one.

Ss: (Read silently and write on paper)

T: (Visually checks the answers pupils are writing.) Good. You all seem to have it. Now take the paper to your seats and do numbers 3, 4, and 5 by yourself.

This 16 minute sequence was typical of the type of assisted learning provided by the Teacher 2 during the presentation of new learning in reading, language, and spelling. In the teacher's mind, it represented the first step ("teach the skill") in the sequence of language instruction. In subsequent main-idea lessons with this group, the process of determining the main idea was solidified and refined so that pupils were able to select the main idea from a group of three options. The same skill was applied (with guidance from the teacher) in basal text selections. It was applied both with teacher guidance and independently in reading from a variety of information books for specific information about "The World Around Us", a unit the group was pursuing as part of their language instruction. The main-idea concept was integrated with their information-gathering efforts in the above unit and later with the paragraph writing they did in conjunction with the unit.

Summary

Teacher 2's language arts program strived to gain for all ability levels a balance between systematic monitoring and affective activities, between developing consciousness regarding how language works and enjoyment

in using language, between teacher assistance and pupil involvement, and between specific skill instruction and integrated language activities. While commercial materials were employed, he made multiple preactive decisions that modified these materials. Both teacher-made and trade book materials were frequently employed as supplemental instructional materials. In short, Teacher 2 seemed to be objective-driven; he manipulated both curricular materials and the learning environment to achieve the balanced instructional program that he felt would develop the students into readers who were not only competent but enthusiastic. While he was acutely conscious of the technical demands of management and effective classroom teaching, his distinguishing characteristic was his effort to be more than a technician by providing instruction that presented tangible assistance to pupils.

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